

"Basic Bible Truths" - Message #7
 "WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT JUDGMENTS & REWARDS"

Introduction:

As we come to our 7th session in "Basic Bible Truths", we want to look at another basic truth in the Scripture:

"WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT JUDGMENTS & REWARDS"

1. Now...we saw in our last session how the Bible divides the true and the false Christians (*Possessors & Professors*)

1. And we saw how Jesus divided these two groups in the parable of *the Wheat & The Tares*. (Mt. 13)

1. The "*wheat*" symbolizes Christians and the "*tares*" symbolize all who reject the true Gospel...

1. And...the point of the parable is that the "*tares*" are...

2. *IMITATION BELIEVERS*.

2. We also saw that Jesus said, that something was going to happen to the "*tares*" at the end of the age.

Matt 13:38-42

38 *and the field is the world...and the tares are the sons of the evil one;*

39 *and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.*

40 *"Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.*

41 *"The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,*

42 *and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

3. Now...the tendency at this point would be to focus on the fact that those "*tares*"...

1. Are gonna be in a heap of trouble...

2. Because someday...they're going to be judged for their sin!

3. And...there's gonna be a terrible price to pay!

2. But...now listen carefully...non-Christians and false Christians aren't the only one's who are going to be judged!

1. Because the Bible teaches that Christians are going to be judged, too!

2. BUT...before you draw any conclusions, let's see what the Bible says about this whole subject of JUDGMENTS.

3. Now...let's establish right up front that the idea of just ONE GENERAL JUDGMENT at the end of the world is not in the Bible.

1. A lot of people seem to think...

1. Someday, the world is gonna come to an end...

2. And then...God's gonna judge everybody...

3. And send the good people to Heaven and the bad people to Hell.

2. Now...while there might be a hint of truth in that...**THAT'S NOT WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES!**
 4. In fact...as I said...the Bible teaches that both Christians **and** non-Christians are gonna face judgment someday.
 1. But...these two groups will be judged based on a totally different criteria...
 1. Furthermore...there is not just one big judgment coming in the future...
 2. But...the Bible teaches that there are *7 DIFFERENT JUDGMENTS!*
 2. And one of those judgments has already taken place!
 3. And another one is in the process of taking place even as I speak!
 4. But...the other 5 will take place in eternity future.
 5. In addition to teaching about 7 JUDGMENTS...the Bible also teaches about REWARDS that are gonna be given.
 1. Obviously, not rewards to those who have rejected Christ...
 1. Or to those who have merely "PROFESSED" Christ...
 2. Based upon the Law or their own good works.
 2. But...the Bible specifically teaches that there are certain REWARDS awaiting those who have placed their faith in Christ.
 3. Those who by faith, have been saved by GRACE ALONE!
 6. So...let's look at the divisions in the Bible of the Judgments and the Rewards.
 1. Now...remember, I said that one of those 7 judgments has already taken place.
 2. And another one is presently taking place, right now.
 3. Which leaves 5 more judgments coming in the future.
 4. And keep in mind: **THIS IS WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.**
 5. This isn't theory or personal opinion.
 6. I'm committed to this little motto of our ministry...*"The most important question on every issue is: 'WHAT DOES GOD SAY'."*
 7. Okay...what DOES the Bible teach about God's judgments?
2. The **FIRST JUDGMENT** is God's judgment for *THE SINS OF BELIEVERS!*
1. The Bible teaches that one of the attributes of God is that He is **JUST**. (*Deut. 32:4; Job 37:23; Ps. 89:14; Is. 45:2*).
 1. And because He is a God of "justice", He has to *execute* His judgment.
 2. In other words, "Justice" means that everybody must be judged by God.
 3. And man has this big problem which we saw in session 2...SIN!
 4. He was born with a sin nature and he sins by choice.
 5. Man's condition before God is seen in Rom. 3:23...
"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."
 6. Now...God has to judge that sin!
 2. So...what does God do?
 1. Well...God has a **very strange strategy** for judging sin in those He's created and loves.

2. He becomes a man and comes to earth in a physical body...
 1. Born of a little virgin girl...
 2. In a little place called Bethlehem.
3. And approximately 30-years later...
 1. On a Cross on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem...
 2. The sinless, perfect Son of God is crucified! (*Jn. 19:17-18*)
4. **Why?** Because the justice of God demanded that He judge sin!
5. And so...He placed all the sin of the whole world on His one and only Son...
 1. And Jesus then took the sinner's place...
 2. And took the just punishment for sin which you and I deserved.
THAT...is exactly what the Bible teaches!

1 Pet 3:18

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust..."

2 Cor 5:21

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

1 Pet 2:24

"...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (This verse is often misused in order to teach that when Christ died, He died for our physical healing...but the context here is not physical healing...but the healing of our sinful condition)

Gal 3:13

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree".

(See *Jn. 5:24; Heb. 9:26*)

6. When Jesus cried on the Cross...*"It is finished"*...
 1. He was saying that through the act of dying as our **Sinbearer**...
 2. He had provided the one and only way of salvation for mankind!
3. But...what was DEATH for Christ... was LIFE for the believing sinner!
 1. And when you and I put our faith in Him and what He did on that Cross in our place...
 1. The JUDGMENT of God for our sin is initiated in our personal lives...
 2. And we are FORGIVEN and set free from ever being judged for our sin again...ever!
 3. It's done...it's finished...we are saved!

Rom 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

2. The sins of all who put their faith in Christ were judged on the Cross of Calvary!
3. Remember that when you sing those wonderful words written by John Wesley...

*"Bearing shame and scoffing rude...
In my place, condemned, He stood...
Sealed my pardon with His blood...
Hallelujah! ~ What a Savior!"*

4. So...one Judgment down...6 to go!

The first judgment is past...but the second judgment is going on right now...

3. The second Judgment is the **Judgment of sins *in the Christian...by the Christian!***

1. This judgment can take place anytime and anywhere.

1. Now...this judgment is executed by you and I...*as Christians...*of ourselves.

2. What do we judge?

1. Well...it's not that we judge our sins or our failures...

2. That was already judged on the Cross...(past, present & future).

3. What we judge is *ourselves*.

4. We judge *ourselves* for allowing such failure and sin to happen in our lives!

2. Now...if we don't judge ourselves, will God condemn us?

1. No...remember...there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
(*Rom. 8:1*)

2. But...even though God won't *condemn* us, He will *chastise* us.

1 Cor 11:31

"But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged."

3. If I refuse to judge myself, then God, in love, will *chastise* or *discipline* me.

4. When the Holy Spirit searches our heart...

1. We don't need to fear anything...

2. Because whatever He exposes in us...

3. His blood can cleanse and make us pure...

4. And use that loving process to continue conforming us into the image of His Son.

Heb 12:7

"It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

5. Has God ever disciplined you? HE HAS ME, MANY TIMES.

6. And I am grateful for every single one of them...no matter how painful.

7. Because I know God disciplines me in love and it's what I need.

(*I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 1:20; II Sam. 7:14-15*)

8. So...when the Holy Spirit exposes sin in my life...

1. I judge myself and confess and acknowledge it before Him...

2. And ask Him to cleanse me and restore our communion & fellowship.

9. So...that's judgment #2.

We've seen...

1. Sins of the believer judged by God on the Cross. (PAST)

2. Self in the believer judged by the believer. (PRESENT)

4. Now...let's look at Judgment #3: **THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORKS OF THE BELIEVER.**

2 Cor 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

1. Now...this judgment will take place in the future!
 1. This *3rd Judgment* will take place immediately following a future event we call THE RAPTURE.
 2. We'll talk about that in detail in one of the upcoming sessions...
 1. But for the sake of time...
 2. Just remember that the Rapture happens when Christ appears in the air...
 3. And takes all believers off the earth to be with Him forever.
 3. And...it's immediately following the Rapture that this particular judgment takes place.
2. Paul refers to this judgment in Rom. 14:10 in writing to Christians...

"But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God."

1. The obvious question at this point is *WHY?*
2. Why will believers stand before the judgment seat of God?
3. Paul answers that in II Cor. 5:9-10...

"Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

4. Furthermore...the Bible teaches that eventually EVERY knee shall bow before God.

Rom 14:11-12

"For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

3. Now remember that this judgment doesn't have anything to do with judgment for sin.
 1. ***WHY NOT?*** Because that was already judged on the Cross.
 2. Well...what's that "*judgment seat*" all about?
 3. The Greek word used here is "*bema*" and has the idea of a raised platform...
 1. Which was used in the Grecian games...
 2. And upon which rewards were given to all the winners.
 3. It was called the "*bema*" or "*the reward seat*".
 4. It never carried the idea of a judicial bench!
 4. So...this judgment will be attended by all believers...but not to be judged BY God for sin.
 5. We're gonna be judged for our "*works*".
 6. Not "*works*" for our salvation...but our "*works*" after we were saved. (*Eph 2:10*)...

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

7. We're gonna be judged for the life we lived for the Lord while on earth.

4. Our lives will be examined before Him regarding our personal conduct and service.
 1. Or work in Jesus Name will be tested.
 1. Our love toward fellow believers.
 2. Our motives will be examined.
 2. And...now watch this...REWARDS WILL BE GIVEN...to those who are found faithful.
 3. It all depends on our faithfulness to the Lord while in the body.
 4. Now...let me quickly add that there's nothing "*crass*" about desiring to receive rewards for faithful service to the King!
 5. In fact, the Bible teaches us specifically that there will be REWARDS for the man or woman who lives a life that honors Christ.
 1. Turn to I Cor. 3:11.
 2. Vs. 11 is about the *FOUNDATION* of the Christian's life.
"For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 3. The foundation of our faith is Jesus Christ.
 4. Now...we all know that a "*foundation*" is the firm structure upon which a house is built.
 5. And Paul is telling us here that as Christians, we are building a life...
 1. A lifestyle...a character...
 2. That must be able to stand the test of that coming Day.
5. We need to pause and ask ourselves... "***How am I building?***"
1. Paul makes it clear here that we can build our lives out of gold, silver and precious stones.
 1. Or...we can choose to build our lives from the materials of wood, hay and straw (*stubble*).
 2. Everything that glorified God in our lives...
 1. Will be looked upon by the Lord at the judgment seat as gold.
 2. And everything that we have done in dependence upon Him...
 3. Will be looked upon as shining like silver....
 4. And precious stones.
 3. But...if we pause and look at our lives and the Holy Spirit exposes the flesh dominating us...
 1. Selfishness..anger...carnality... self-dependence...
 2. A lack of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and allowing the old man to dominate our life...
 3. We need to recognize that our life will not stand the test.
 4. But...if we bring those things to Him in honest humility, confession and repentance...
 1. They will be burned-up now...
 2. And we won't have to face them later.
 2. Now...that includes our "*motives*".
 1. In fact, I think we'll be surprised at how much of what is done in ministry is done only in the energy of the flesh.
 2. Much of what we do as believers is not done for the glory of God at all!
 3. So...we just need to check our hearts now and then, don't we?

3. Because...one thing for sure...the life that we are building will one day be examined by Christ Himself.
 1. And if it doesn't burn up when exposed to the fire of God's scrutiny...we will be rewarded.
 2. If not (*if it's just wood, hay and straw*)...it'll be burned up!
 3. And Vs. 15 says we will suffer loss, which means we'll lose our reward.
 4. We will be saved, but in the same sense as a man is saved from a burning house.
 1. Just himself..
 2. Not bringing a single thing out with him.
 5. So...the bottom line is that you are either gonna get a reward or you're not gonna get a reward!
4. Now...exactly what are the REWARDS given to faithful believers?
 1. The Bible symbolizes rewards as CROWNS.
 2. But...before we just briefly mention them, keep in mind that rewards are **EARNED**.

(*Matt. 10:42; Rev. 22:12; Luke 19:17; II tim. 4:7-8; I Cor. 9:24-25; 3:11-15; Rev. 2:10*)

3. But...Salvation is a free gift!
5. Five crowns are mentioned as rewards in the Bible.
 1. The Crown of JOY or REJOICING - The reward of ministry (*Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19*).
 2. The Crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS- The reward of faithfulness in testimony (*II tim. 4:8*).
 3. The Crown of LIFE - The reward of faithfulness under trial (*James 1:12; Rev. 2:10*).
 4. The Crown of GLORY - The reward of faithfulness under suffering (*I Pet. 5:4; Heb. 2:9*).
 5. And...The INCORRUPTIBLE Crown - The reward of self-control (*I Cor. 9:24-25*).

So...we've seen 3 of the 7 Judgments in the Bible.

*Sins of the believer judged by God on the Cross. (PAST)

*Self in the believer judged by the believer. (PRESENT)

*The Judgment of the **works** of the believer.
(FUTURE)

We have to hurry now to see the other 4.

6. Number 4...The **JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS**. (*Mt. 25:31-46*)

1. This Judgment is also called the Judgment of the Gentiles and/or The separation of *The Sheep & The Goats*.
 1. This judgment is going to take place at the end of the Tribulation period.
 2. When the Lord Returns to earth He will sit on His glorious throne on the earth.
 3. And among his first official acts as the King, He will judge the Gentiles.

2. He will place the *"sheep"* on his right hand.
 1. Those are the Gentiles who have been saved during the Tribulation.
 2. And on His left hand He will place the *"goats"*.
 3. Those are the Gentiles who have rejected Him during the Tribulation period.
 4. The *"sheep"* will be left on earth to enter the Millennium.

 5. And the *"goats"* will be cast *"into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Mt.25:41)
 6. That's the 4th Judgment in the Bible.

 7. Judgment #5 is **GOD'S JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL.** (Ezek. 20:33-38; Mal. 3:2-5)
 1. God will judge individual Jews in the wilderness of Judea.
 1. The rebellious will be purged.
 2. They'll be excluded from the land and not allowed to enter into the Kingdom.
 2. And those who have turned to the Lord will recognize Jesus as their Messiah.
 1. They will recognize Him whom they have pierced...
 2. And enter into the millennial blessing. (Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10)
- *That's 5 of the 7 Judgments in the Bible.***
8. Judgment #6 is the one most people have heard about and associate with judgment: THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT!

Rev 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

14 *And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

15 *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

1. Now...we can't compare this scene to any courtroom in America.
 1. There will be a Judge...but there will be no jury.
 2. There will be a Prosecutor...but there will be no defense attorney.
 3. There will be a sentence...but there will be no appeal.
 4. **THIS IS THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD!**
2. All of the unsaved dead will be standing before Jesus, the Judge.
 1. The great and the small.
 2. The biggest and the most famous.
 1. All the way from the most famous...
 2. Down to the least and the unknown.
 3. They will all go...one by one...before the awesome and majestic **GREAT WHITE THRONE!**
 4. And the Bible says they will all... every last one...be sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell!
3. **Why?** Because..his/her name will not be found in the Book of Life. (Vs. 15)
 1. This Book contains the name of every single person born into the world.
 2. And if...by the time that person dies...
 1. He has not received God's provision of sacrifice to remove his sin...
 2. His name will be blotted out of it's pages!
 3. And Jesus will say on that day... ***"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."*** (Mt. 25:41 *parallel passage*)
 4. And the condemned will die the **SECOND DEATH.**
 5. That's what the Bible says will happen at the **Great White Throne Judgment!**

The **FIRST JUDGMENT** is God's judgment for **THE SINS OF BELIEVERS!**

The second Judgment is the **Judgment of sins in the Christian...by the Christian!**

Judgment #3: **THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORKS OF THE BELIEVER.**

Number 4...The **JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.**

Judgment #5 is **GOD'S JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL.**

Judgment #6 is the one most people have heard about and associate with judgment: **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT!**

9. Now...the 7th and final Judgment is **THE JUDGMENT OF THE FALLEN ANGELS!**

Jude 1:6

"And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

2 Pet 2:4

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment..."

1. Now...we're not sure exactly "when" this judgment will take place.
 1. The Bible doesn't tell us.
 2. But...many Bible students believe it will take place at the end of the Millennium, but before the Great White Throne.
2. The demons will be judged for their one sin of following Satan in his rebellion against God! (*Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:12-19*).
 1. And they are cast into the lake of fire!
 2. *Rev. 20:10.*

"And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Basic Bible Truths - Lesson #7

"WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT JUDGMENTS & REWARDS"

1. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the wheat represents the _____ and the tares represent the _____
(p. 1)
2. The Bible tells us that there will be _____ different judgments.
3. One of God's judgments has already taken place, _____ is taking place right now, and there are _____ that will take place in the future. (p. 2)
4. The First Judgment took place on the Cross and was for the _____
_____ (p. 2)
5. What is the natural man's spiritual condition according to Romans 3:23? (p. 3)

6. Why did Jesus have to go to the Cross and die? (p. 3) _____

7. Why can't we use I Peter 2:24 to support the belief that when Jesus died on the Cross, He died so that we could all be healed from our physical sicknesses? (p. 3) _____

8. Write a statement below which describes what you believe Romans 8:1 means. (p. 4)

9. When will the Second Judgment take place? (p. 4) _____
10. If we don't judge ourselves, what will God do? (p. 4) _____

11. When will Judgment #3 take place? (p. 5) _____
12. What verse in the Scripture tells us that God expects Christians to "work"?
(p. 6) _____
13. What are Christians going to be judged for at the "bema" seat? (p. 6) _____

14. The 5 Crowns mentioned in the Bible are: (p. 8)
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
15. List the 7 judgments in the Bible:
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
16. Which judgment will be the final judgment of the world? (p. 10)

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